Vertues Triumph
AT THE
SUPPRESSION
OF
VICE.

Being a Discourse occasioned by
His Majesty's Royal Proclamation
AGAINST
Prophaneness and *Debauchery*,
June the Twenty ninth 1688.

For the promoting and furthering which Noble and Excellent Design, doubtless, all good Men are concerned.

By a GENTLEMAN.

——Ubi non est pudor,
Nec cura juris, Sanctitas, Pietas, Fides,
Instabile Regnum.—— Sen.

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AS it is said of Kings and Princes in holy Writ, *Dij estis*, ye are Gods; That is to say, God's especial Vicegerents on Earth, constituted by him for the Government of the World, under whose more especial Providence and Care Kings and Princes therefore are (as the learned *Grotius* observes) for as the wise Man speaks; *By me Kings reign and Princes decree Justice*: So in nothing do they appear more illustrious and like themselves, and thereby add a Lustre and Splendor to their Diadems they wear, nor make them sit faster on their Heads, than when they appear Zealous for the Honour of their Soveraign Lord and Master the King of Kings and Lord of Lords: Promoting the same, in being Examples themselves, and giving Countenance and Encouragement to Religion and Vertue, and discountenancing, frowning upon, and suppressing all Prophaneness, Wickedness, and Vice. *Thus scattering all Wickedness with their Eyes* (as the Wise Man speaks:) To which God hath made a Promise, *That they that honour him he will honour, and they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed*: And by this

Psal 82. 6.

Prov. 8. 15.

Prov. 20. 26.

1 Sam. 2. 30.

 Means

Means they alſo make themſelves Kings of Men; for he that is Governour of licentious, diſolute and debauched Subjects, may in a Sence be ſaid to be but a King of Beaſts; for, in truth, all Irreligion, Prophaneneſs and Debauchery makes them Beaſts, or very near it. This noble Action of Princes makes them great and illuſtrious throughout the World, and alſo very formidable to their Subjects at home; they thus eſtabliſh their Thrones by Righteouſneſs, when they are thus good as well as great. And indeed a wiſe Heathen tells us, "Religion is the Cement of all "Societies or Communities, and that it is much more eaſy to "build a Caſtle in the Air without any Ground to found it upon, "than to eſtabliſh a Government without Religion. I have alſo read how that *Livy* obſerves, "That *Numa*, next to Laws, by "the ſenſe of Religion reduced the City of *Rome* to Order and "good Government, and ſo to Proſperity, by which they be-"came ſo Formidable and Conſiderable to their Neighbours, that "they judged it Sacrilege to vex or moleſt them, a People ſo "addicted to the Service of God. For as Religion cauſeth good "Orders, ſo good Orders create Peace and Concord, which is a "Peoples great Strength; and we have had late Inſtances of good Princes who have followed the ſame Steps: I ſhall mention only one, *viz. Lewis* XIII. the laſt King of *France*, Father to the preſent King, of whom it is recorded by a late worthy proteſtant Hiſtorian of our own (to the immortal Honour of the ſaid Prince) "That as he was Pious himſelf to an intenſe Degree, "ſo he put out ſundry Proclamations againſt Vice and Wicked-"neſs, particularly againſt Swearing, againſt Pride in Apparel, "as alſo againſt Duels, and the laſt was ſo ſtrict, That both "the Appellant and Defendant, whoſoever did ſurvive, ſhould "ſuffer Death without Mercy, and both be deprived of Chriſti-"an Burial, and rot upon the Gallows with their Heels upward.

Mr. Ja. Howell.

Now can any vertuous and good Men, who have any Love to God, Religion and Goodneſs, but upon this happy Occaſion of his Majeſties Proclamation, cry out *Vive le Roy*, Let the King ever live and be proſperous and happy, when now (exerting his ſoveraign Authority againſt Prophaneneſs, Vice and Wickedneſs) he is pleaſed to let all ſuch Malefactors know, that he will not bear the Sword in vain. And alſo how can we but heartily concur with this his Majeſty's great, noble and chriſtian Deſign? that being well and throughly proſecuted, will be to his immortal Honour

and

and Renown; and say, let it be as great *James* hath spoken? And accordingly join Hearts and Hands with him in the pursuing and chasing out of the World (as far as is possible) all Irreligion, Debauchery and Profaneness; this being, without all Doubt and Question, the Cause of God indeed, this being the best way doubtless, to make an Atonement with God for the Sins of the Nation, under which it now groans, and to engage the potent Arms of Heaven on our Side, to allay, if not to heal, our unnatural Heats and Divisions; to introduce Religion, Love and Peace among us; to make our Soveraign and his Kingdom happy. Let us now give Thanks to God, who hath been pleased to put this noble Resolution into the Kings Heart (for more especially *the King's Heart is in the Hand of the Lord*, as *Solo-* Prov. 21. 1. *man* speaks) now to appear so illustrious and like himself, God's Vicegerent on Earth, for the Reformation of a licentious People; how can we forbear but add our great and general Shouts and Acclamations of Joy and Satisfaction, to be carried, not only through the City, but the Kingdom? For never certainly was there a better Occasion given for our Acclamations of Joy and Triumph than this.

In the next place, May all our worthy Nobility and Gentry follow that excellent Method their Prince hath set them, to be exemplary in their Lives, and then discountenance Sin in their Inferiors; then how would they be able by their very Nods or Frowns to do Wonders towards the reforming the Manners of the Nation.

May all our reverend and pious Clergy in the next place, preach down all Prophaneness, Wickedness and Debauchery in their Pulpits and Conversations, which now, not only God, but the King his Deputy on Earth, more especially commands them.

May also all our Magistrates and publick Officers under the King, conscientiously perform their Duties according to their Oaths, and avoid Perjury; as also the Guilt of Prophaneness and Debauchery, his Majesty having now commanded them to endeavour, according to the good Laws of the Land to suppress it: And considering further, that this is the great Plague of the Nation at present, and worthy their Care and Diligence to remove off from us: For certainly there can be no greater and more formidable Plague, Curse and Mischief befal a Nation or People, than to be given up to a reprobate Mind, and

lose

loſe or forget the Senſe of Good and Evil, to be over-run with Debauchery and Prophaneneſs, and this by the univerſal Conſent of all the knowing and wiſe Men that ever lived in all Ages of the World, Jew, Heathen, or Chriſtian.

And may all that are any ways guilty of theſe horrid Crimes (not to be once named among Chriſtians) now upon ſight of his Majeſty's Proclamation, lay aſide their Follies and debauched Courſes and become reformed, wiſe and happy, that there might be no Occaſion of the executing the Severity of the Laws upon them.

May alſo all ſober and vertuous Perſons in the Nation from his Majeſty's Proclamation be encouraged to go on in their vertuous Courſe, and reſolutely own Religion, Vertue and Sobriety, and withſtand the Current of bold, daring, prophane, atheiſtical Diſcourſes and Practices of audacious and wicked Men, and recommend daily by their Practice, Sobriety, Vertue and true Goodneſs to the World, and prudently by their Diſcourſes and Converſation bring it into Vogue and Requeſt, and adviſe, reprove, admoniſh and perſwade with all chriſtian Mildneſs and Gentleneſs the Vicious and Prophane, and in caſe of Contumacy to inform the Magiſtrate of them, for they now have not only God, but the King to encourage them herein.

Now further, to promote his ſacred Majeſty's noble Deſign, and to ſhew the Excellency of it, give me leave to repreſent the Nature of thoſe Crimes his Majeſty would have reformed, and that (for the moſt part) in the very Words of the learned and judicious. An Author of great Eminency thus diſcourſes. "Conſi-"der, ſaith he, that the Vertues of moderating the uſe of Meat "and Drink is called Abſtinence and Sobriety; but as to what "concerns the Touch is called Chaſtity and Modeſty. So "the Pleaſures that ariſe from the Taſt are under the Go-"vernment of Temperance, which only approves of thoſe that "are neceſſary according to right Reaſon: The infallible Rule "he proceeds by is this, To take that for a Meaſure in what "concerns the Body, which Nature hath made neceſſary; and "never for Pleaſure take admit of any Pleaſure.

First, *As to the Vice of Gluttony and Drunkenness.*

AS it is most hateful and detestable; that degrades a Man, robs him of his Reason, and turns him into a Beast, so it is (as one speaks) "bigg with a thousand Evils, the Mother "of most other Vices. And (as the said worthy Author goes on) "This is (saith he) That which brought Death into the World, "and ministers Matter in great measure to the rest of Evils. "From hence proceeds Dullness of Spirit, Sloth, Weariness of e-"very thing, Scurrility, Debauchery, heaviness of Mind, and "dissolution of all Vertues, Prodigality, Beggary, a long Train "of Diseases, and Death it self in the Conclusion. This is "that swells our Bills of Mortality, for vicious Humours con-"tracted from Excess in Meats and Drinks, are the Food almost "of all Diseases. According as the Father speaks. *Fussisti Domine, & sic est, ut omnis inordinatus affectus sibi sit pœna.* Aug. Conf. And further, according to that proverbial saying:

Non plures gladio quam vecidere gula.

Gluttony and Intemperance kill more than the Sword.

Next as to the Vice of Luxury and Unchastity.

THE said Author goes on, "Luxury is a brutal Vice, and "that which of all others puts a Man the most out of Coun-"tenance; he that falls into it, rarely gets out again, until at "last *it brings Rottenness into his Bones*, as the Scripture speaks. Prov. 12. 4.
The learned *Grotius* thus also discourses of it in his Book *De veritate Christiana Religionis*: "The Conjunction of Male with Fe-"male, whereby Mankind is propagated, is a thing most worthy "of the Care of Laws: Those *Greeks* who praised the Commu-"nity of Women (saith he) what have they else done, but "turned the whole City into a common Stews? The very Ani-"mals, some of them, observe a kind of conjugal Covenant: "How much more should the divinest Creature, Man, that he "might not spring out of uncertain Seed, and so the mutual Af-"fection that Nature hath kindled between the Parent and the "Children be utterly extinguished? The most perfect Law "of Christ piercеth to the very Root of Vices, and condemneth "him that hath but assaulted any Womans Chastity, or defloo-

"red

"red her with his luſtful Eyes, as guilty in the Judgment of "God, who beholds the Heart, of Sin deſired though not per-"formed.

As to the abominable Vice of prophane Swearing and Curſing.

"THE Tongue (ſaith the former Author) has in a manner "the power of Life and Death: A Tongue without a Guard "upon it is like a City without a Wall; God hath beſtowed "the Faculty of Speech upon us for the teſtimony and Propaga-"tion of the Truth; as alſo the Means of converſing together and making known our Minds to each other. Now the profane Swearer makes uſe of his Tongue to contemn and defy, yea re-proach his Maker, ſomewhat like what *Job*'s Wife adviſed him to, To *Curſe God and die*, intimating that Death would be a cer-tain Attendant upon that hight of Wickedneſs. This kind of Language is ſome of *that deadly Poiſon* mentioned by the Apo-ſtle, of which he juſtly concludes that the Tongue of Man is full, *and whereby it is ſet on Fire of Hell*, and yet he mentions only the Curſing of Man, not God. This Sin of common ſwearing and curſing, as it is an open daring Affront to the Almighty, is the certain Product of an atheiſtical and prophane Heart, that is at Defiance with Heaven, and certainly ſhould not be once named among Chriſtians (our Religion abſolutely forbidding it) eſpecially reformed Chriſtians, as we profeſs our ſelves to be. And indeed nothing renders God Almighty more contemptible to Mankind than common prophane Swearing, and conſequently introduces Debauchery and Wickedneſs, to the Diſhonour of a Nation and People, and their Ruin at laſt; and therefore nothing can be (as I humbly conceive) more worthy the Care of Prin-ces and Magiſtrates, than the effectual ſuppreſſing thereof. I would requeſt thoſe Gentlemen who give themſelves a Liberty herein, to conſider whether they would be well pleaſed if they were made the common bye-Word of the Town, and their Names toſt about like a Diſhclout or Football, by every mean pitiful Fellow in his common Diſcourſe, yea even in his ſcurrilities and filthy Diſcourſes; and then let him not do that herein to another, eſpecially to his God, which he would not have done by any o-ther to himſelf. Yea, this Crime is of ſo abominable a Kind, and ſo contrary to the common Dictates of Nature, as a Hea-

James 3.6.

then

then will tell us, *Discite justitiam moniti, & non temnere divos.* Virg. There is not any Nation among the heathen World, so prodigiously barbarous and wicked at this day, as to contemn and reproach the Gods they worship, nor will indure that any other should slight or contemn them. Such Heathens therefore would all, doubtless, agree unanimously, That that Man who is thus daringly Impudent against Heaven, is most worthy to have his Tongue pierced through with a hot Iron, as a just Punishment of this Offence and wickedness. This Sin also renders them that are guilty of it, most unsociable and offensive to all sober People, and makes them abandoned and avoided, as infernal Spirits rather than Men; but they may be well accounted, in some Sense, worse than those unclean Spirits; for the Devils fear and tremble, and dare not be so bold with God; they durst not defy or reproach our blessed Saviour, when upon Earth, but were subject to him, and commanded by him, and were forced to acknowledg him and beg his Favour.

By this Representation of the before mentioned Vices and Sins, sufficiently evinces the Piety, Christianity and Nobleness of his Majesty's Soul and Mind, and the Worthiness and Excellency of his Design, in his said Proclamation; fit to be taken Notice of by us, and to meet with a suitable Reception by all his Subjects, and make us resolved to yield unto him all Love, Loyalty and Obedience, according to our Christian Duty and Allegiance; and to which purpose give me leave to present to you the judicious Discourse of the forementioned worthy *Grotius*. "I inculcate into Subjects (saith he) Obedience to their Princes, "according to the Precept of Christ and his Apostles. Let "them desire the best, give God thanks for the middle Sort, "and bear with the worst, for the Doctrine and Example of "Christ. And when I speak of Subjects, under that Name I "comprehend also inferior Magistrates, who in respect of the "highest Power are *but Subjects sent by the King*, as St. *Peter* 1 Pet. 2. 14. "saith, I preach not (saith he) *Evangelium armatum*, an armed Gospel, as some whom he there mentioned had done.

Let us consider, that if the Possession of Truth, of Purity and Integrity of Heart and Life, in our Christianity, is always productive of Peace, Unity and Charity, as most certainly it is, for Peace and Holiness are made inseparable in Scripture: Now from our great Discords and Animosities what may we conclude,

but that there is a great Deficiency among us at this Day of thoſe primitive Chriſtian Graces? And may I here take occaſion in middſt of our voluminous Controverſies, at this Day among us, to ſpeak a ſerious Truth, that (I humbly conceive) deſerves to be taken Notice of by us, That while we make uſe of ſtrong Arguments for our reformed Chriſtianity, againſt our Adverſaries the Romaniſts, we take ſpecial Care we do not weaken them, if not render them wholly inſignificant by our unchriſtian Lives and Converſations. I humbly conceive, if we who are Proteſtants (without better and reformed chriſtian Religion) are not more in love with it, and do not generally live better Lives than our Adverſaries with their Religion, I cannot conceive, how we can expect God ſhould continue it to us, or what other Advantage poſſibly we can reap from the enjoyment of it, but this, That for the abuſe of ſo great a Mercy we ſhould have the greater Condemnation at the laſt in Hell: Let us for Shame be up and doing, out-live our Adverſaries as well as out-argue them; and now upon this happy Occaſion let us begin this Work and Reformation. Let us be exemplary in our Lives, and the beſt Chriſtians in the World, as we have the beſt Chriſtianity: It is not enough, *Eloquia Dei ſcire, ſed ſecundùm hæc vivere*, that will advantage us; therefore let us bring forth better Fruit, let us become more humble, holy, devout, peaceable and charitable; more governable and ſubmiſſive to Authority, more loyal, more juſt and honeſt in all our Dealings, than other Chriſtians; and then, as a late pious and worthy Author ſpeaks, in reſpect to Heathens: "Oh were our Duty (ſaith he) as St. *Chryſoſtom* ſweetly exhorteth) "of Piety and a vertuous Life, "faithfully complied with, we might ſoon, and even without "Miracles, convert the World to Chriſtianity. So let me apply it in reference to our Adverſaries the Romaniſts, we ſhould need no ſuch multiplicity of Arguments to evince the Truth of our Religion, or perſwade others to come over to us and embrace ours. Let us at laſt conſult our reverend and pious Divines, and ſeriouſly ask them what their Opinion is, what is likely to be the Reſult and Conſequent of it, *viz.* That when in a manner all the Chriſtians this Day in the World, beſides our ſelves, are conſtantly every day devoutly upon their Knees at their ſolemn publick Devotions at Church, at the uſual times and hours of Prayer, according to the Conſtitutions and Practice

dice of the primitive Christians, That we in *England* are generally at the same times, either wholly taken up in our Trades, or, which is worse, are at our Recreations and Diversions; or, perhaps, doing nothing; or, which is more abominable, at Taverns and places of Entertainment and Debauchery, and not One of a Hundred, in some Parishes (where there is constant Prayers) and in other Parishes not one of a Thousand, that will give their Attendance upon God's publick Worship, and perform their Duty and Homage to him, who is the Breath of their Nostrils, the Author of all they are or have, as if we in *England* had not a God to serve, or had so much pressing Business upon our Hands above the rest of the World, sufficient to excuse our Neglect herein, or else that we had got a Dispensation from the Almighty to transgress his Laws, and neglect his publick Worship and Service. Let us seriously and sadly consider how much the Christianity of our Days degenerates from what it was in the first primitive Times, when it is said, That our Saviour's Disciples and Followers (after his Ascension) *were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God*, and we never all the Week long but upon *Sundays*, if then. It was (as one observes) the Jewish Aphorism, *Decima ut dives fias:* Answering to our old English Adage, That *Meat and Mass*, or *Prayer and Provinder do never hinder Work.* To which may be added the Answer of the Prophet to *Amasiah*: *The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.* So that nothing, doubtless, in Conclusion, would be lost by a conscientious daily Attendance upon the publick Worship of God. And as it is said of honest *Socrates*, That he was wont to curse those Men who first separated Profit and Honesty, nothing being profitable and expedient but so far as it is void of Baseness. So I am ready to curse that wicked Opinion, too rife among us, That we serve God sufficiently in our Shops and Trades all the Week long; thereby separating the daily Attendance upon God's publick Worship from Religion and Piety. I humbly conceive it is a very great and dangerous Error (and Mistake, and of very bad Consequence) which is now so prevalent amongst us at this Day, *viz.* To croud all our Duties of publick Worship of God, yea, all our piety, into the Sunday or Lord's Day, with the total Neglect of it all the rest of the Week.

Lu. 24.25.

Chr. 25.9.

And as to Peace and Unity, may I present unto you the Discourse of an eminent Protestant Divine at the Synod of *Dort*, in his

his Sermon there; it was *Scultetus* of the *Palatinate*. "It is "(saith he) *Summum hominis gaudium*, The chiefest Joy of a "good Man, to see the peace and flourishing of the Church; "That it is *Summum hominis votum*, The chiefest Desire of a "good Man, to pray for the Peace of the Church; That it is, "*Summum hominis studium*, Also the chiefest Study and Care of "a good Man to procure the Peace of the Church. And yet, notwithstanding this, to see Christians in our Days, on all hands, to be still in love with Dissention, and widning the Wounds and Rents of Christendom, how can a good and honest Heart but lament and bewail it? And notwithstanding, although this Evil seems impossible to be amended as it is for a rich Man to enter into Heaven; yet that which is impossible with Man is possible with God. I shall earnestly pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*, for the Peace of Christendom: For alas! must the Contests and Controversies of the Christian World no otherwise be accommodated and ended but by Victory and Conquest, and imbruing our Hands in one anothers Blood? O! when will the time come that our Christianity will so far prevail with us in Christendom, to beat our Swords into Plough-Shares, and our Spears into Pruning-Hooks, and to learn War and Contention no more: Unity and Peace is so great a Jewel, no wonder it made that good Emperor *Matthias* chose this Motto, *Concordia lumine major*.

Thus far my own Thoughts have led me upon this happy Occasion, wishing all Happiness and Prosperity to his Sacred Majesty, his Royal Consort, his Royal Highness the Prince of *Wales*, and all the Royal Family; the Welfare of my Mother the Church of *England*, and the Peace of the Kingdom, for the promoting of which great Blessings to us all, I can apprehend nothing better and more effectual, than the through prosecution of his Majesty's present, noble, excellent christian Design, unto which I could not therefore forbear but add my mean Plaudit; in which, as I hope I have the concurrence of Heaven, yea, of God, Angels and all good Men; so, I think, none can take Offence thereat but Devils and wicked Men.

FINIS.